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The Miniſtry of Reconciliation: Repreſenting the benign Tendency of the Goſpel; and that 'tis the friendly Office of Miniſters, as the Embaſſadors (or Agents) of CHRIST, *to preſs Men with all imaginable Tenderneſs, Humility, and Earneſtneſs to accept the Treaty of* RECONCILIATION, *as eſtabliſhed* in *Him, and urged* by *Him, while on Earth:*

A

SERMON

Preached at the Pariſh-Church of

All-Saints in NORTHAMPTON.

BY JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of *Weſton-Favell*, in *Northamptonſhire.*

We are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you *by* us: *We pray* you *in Chriſt's Stead be ye reconciled unto God.* 2 Cor. v. 20.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

2 COR. v. 18.

All Things are of GOD, *who hath reconciled us to himſelf by* JESUS CHRIST, *and hath given to us the Miniſtry of Reconciliation.*

THE Love of God, that ſupremely glorious, and ſupremely gracious Being, is of all other Tempers, the moſt delightful and divine. A ſacred Flower, which in its early Bud is Happineſs, and in its full Bloom is Heaven.—To plant this noble Principle in the Breaſt, to cultivate its Growth, and bring it to Maturity, is the grand End of all Religion, and the genuine Fruit of Faith unfeigned.—Angels are happy, becauſe the Love of GOD, triumphs eternally, and without a Rival, in their exalted Affections.

True Believers are happy, becauſe the Love of GOD, in a prevailing Degree, is ſhed abroad in their Hearts. The Goſpel is a Diſpenſation of Happineſs, becauſe it diſcovers the ſuper-abundant Loving-kindneſs of GOD to Man, and urges the moſt engaging Motives for our ardent Love to his Almighty Majeſty.

The Goſpel repreſents the great GOD, not only as beſtowing upon his Creatures, all the Good they enjoy; but as effecting their Reconciliation to his own adorable Self. Effecting this moſt deſirable of all Bleſſings, not barely by vouchſafing a Pardon, but a Pardon procured by the Death of his Son: and, by this enriching Circumſtance, infinitely enhanced; arrayed in all the Charms, that Heaven itſelf could give.—To render the Purpoſes of his Love more effectual and extenſive, he has inſtituted an Order of Men to publiſh theſe glad Tidings; and to invite, yea to beſeech the World, to partake the exceeding Riches of his Grace.—All which the Apoſtle has expreſſed in my Text, with his uſual Energy and Conciſeneſs; "All Things are of GOD, who

" hath reconciled us to himſelf by *JESUS*
" *CHRIST*, and hath given to us the Mi-
" niſtry of Reconciliation."

From which Words, permit me with all that Simplicity, which becomes a Miniſter of the humble JESUS,

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable Repreſentation of the bleſſed GOD, diſcoverable even by the Light of Nature, *All Things are of Him.*

II. To remind you, how much more illuſtriouſly the delightful Attributes of the DEITY are diſplayed in the Accompliſhment of our Redemption; in that *He hath reconciled Us to Himſelf by JESUS CHRIST.*

III. To obſerve the benign Import, and beneficial Tendency of the Goſpel Miniſtry, expreſſed in that remarkable Clauſe, *He hath given to Us the Miniſtry of Reconciliation.*

Firſt, Then let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable Repreſentation of the

the bleſſed GOD, diſcoverable even by the Light of Nature, *All Things are of Him.* —Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens are his, with all their Hoſts. Thrones and Dominions, Principalities and Powers, all the happy Beings, that ſit at the Fountain-Head of Felicity, were produced by his Power, and are ſupplied with Bleſſings from his Hand, are filled with Joy from his Countenance. — If we trace the various Emanations of Comfort and Advantage, that refreſh our lower World, we ſhall find Reaſon to acknowledge with the *Pſalmiſt*, " All our freſh Springs are in GOD." The Day is thine, ſays the ſame ſacred Writer, and the Night is thine; Thou haſt prepared the Light and the Sun. The magnificent Luminaries in the Sky, are Lamps of the LORD; hung up on high, to diſpenſe the chearing Gift of Light amidſt all the Families of Nature. The Interchanges of Night and Day, with the Viciſſitudes of revolving Seaſons, are his Miniſters; all ſent on Errands of Kindneſs, and bringing the moſt valuable Preſents in their Hands. The innumerable Variety of living Creatures, and of nutrimental Vegetables,

getables, are the Portion, not which our own Induſtry has procured, but which our heavenly Father's Bounty has ſettled upon us.

Every great Endowment, beſtowed on the Children of Men; every noble Atchivement, accompliſhed by renowned Perſonages; theſe derive their Original from the uncreated Fountain of Perfection and of Power.—If *Solomon* is poſſeſſed of enlarged Wiſdom, and kingly Qualities; he expreſly acknowledges, It is from the LORD, ſuperintending human Affairs, that ſuch Kings are advanced to reign; and by the LORD enlightening their Minds, that ſuch Princes decree Juſtice. If, at one Period, *Nebuchadnezzar* purſues his Conqueſts with irreſiſtible Impetuoſity, it is to ſcourge the offending People of the LORD; and baniſh Idolatry from their Worſhip, as the driving Wind ſwept the Chaff from their Floors, If, at another Juncture, *Cyrus* is equally victorious, and "comes upon "Princes as upon Morter, and as the Pot-"ter treadeth Clay;" it was the LORD of Hoſts that raiſed up this accompliſhed Com-

Commander from the Eaſt, and bid him execute his Deſigns of reſtoring Love to his reformed Nation.—All thoſe Arts which meliorate, and Sciences which embeliſh Life, even theſe are from the LORD, "who is wonderful in Counſel, and excel-"lent in Working."

The Time would fail me to enumerate Particulars.—Whatever is beneficial to Communities, or comfortable to Individuals; whatever ſprings from the Rain of Heaven, or is produced by fruitful Seaſons; whatever adminiſters to the Improvement, or chears the Heart of Man; all, all acknowledge GOD for their Author. He is the Giver of every good and perfect Gift. The whole Earth is filled with the Profuſion of his Beneficence. And where, where is the Creature, that has not taſted, that does not ſubſiſt on, the inexhauſtible Stores of his Bounty?—And though Affliction alſo comes from the Father of our Spirits, yet this is no Derogation from his tender Mercies. Since He chaſtens, not with an arbitrary Severity, but with a parental Pity; He chaſtens, only to amend; and theſe light,

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theſe tranſient Tribulations, are Preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal Weight of Glory.

And is not ſuch a Being worthy of our higheſt Admiration, and our devouteſt Love? Has He not, by ſuch ineffable Excellencies, ſuch unmeaſurable Benignity—Has he not an undoubted Claim, to the Affections of our Hearts, the Praiſes of our Tongues, and the unintermitted Services of our Lives? He is the Source of all our Good; ſhould He not be alſo the Center of all our Gratitude, and of our whole Obedience?—But, our Obligations will riſe immenſely higher, if we conſider,

Secondly, How much more illuſtriouſly the delightful Attributes of the DEITY are diſplayed in the Accompliſhment of our Redemption; in that *He hath reconciled Us to Himſelf by JESUS CHRIST.*—Man was created upright, immaculate, and in th Image of GOD. Heavenly Wiſdom ſhone bright in his Underſtanding, and true Holineſs ſat enthroned in his Heart.—But how ſoon, and how fatally, did He fall! From what Height of Perfection, to what

Depth of Degeneracy! Since that deſtructive Tranſgreſſion, all Fleſh has corrupted his Way; every Man is become brutiſh in his Knowledge; and the Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart, is only evil continually. " Our Iniquities ſeparated be-" tween Us and our GOD, and our Sins " hid his Face from Us," as from an abominable Object. Nay, our Sins accuſed Us at his righteous Tribunal, and, like the Blood of *Abel*, cried to Heaven for Vengeance. Vengeance and fiery Indignation was our expected Doom, and eternal Death the Wages due to our Offences.—What rendered the Miſery of Mankind ſtill more exceſſively deplorable, and only not deſperate, was, That They *were without Strength*; without any Power to make Satisfaction for their Provocations, or extricate themſelves from this Abyſs of Woe.—Oh wretched, wretched Man, if left in this State of Guilt and Ruin! If abandoned by the GOD, from whom Thou haſt ungratefully revolted, better had it been for Thee never to have exiſted.

But, behold the Kindneſs and Love of GOD our Saviour! Hearken to the Sound-

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ing of his Bowels and of his Mercies towards Us! " I have ſeen, ſaid He, (as in " the Caſe of enſlaved *Iſrael*) I have ſeen " the Affliction of my fallen Creatures. " They have undone themſelves, but in " me * is their Recovery. Satan has de- " ceived, and deceiving has deſtroyed " them; but I, even I will deliver them." —Wherewithall will the LORD, accompliſh this Deſign of his free, unmerited Goodneſs? By the Blood of Bulls, or of Goats, or of all the Cattle upon a thouſand Hills? Contemptible, to the laſt Degree, are ſuch beggarly Oblations; only ſo far as they typefy the all-glorious Sacrifice.— Was an Angel charged with this important Buſineſs, or the higheſt Seraph bidden to interpoſe as the Repairer of our Breach? The Angels were abſolutely incapable of executing ſo great a Work. It required a far abler Agent, to negotiate our Reconciliation. It muſt coſt incomparably more, to redeem guilty Souls. Therefore the GOD of our Salvation " laid the Help upon One " that is mighty." He appointed, to the moſt momentous of all Offices, the moſt illuſtrious of all Beings. He appointed his

* See Hoſea Ch. xiii. 9.

own Son, the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon.

Behold then the Son of GOD, taking our Nature, that he may act as our Mediator. Admirable Conſtitution! full of Wonder, and full of Grace!—How joyful to the Sinner! The Work muſt infallibly proſper in ſuch Hands. Such a Surety cannot fail of ſucceeding, in all he undertakes.—How gracious in the Father! Could there be a ſtronger Aſſurance, or a more emphatical Demonſtration of his boundleſs Benificence, than to ſend the Son of his Boſom; the Son of his eternal Delight; the Son, dearer to Him than all Worlds?—How condeſcending in the Saviour. Would *Ahaſuerus* abdicate his imperial Diadem, or the great Ruler of *Babylon* forego the Honours of his enlarged Dominions, to attend on the Welfare of ſome ignoble Captive that grinds at a Mill, or of ſome infamous Malefactor that is chained in a Dungeon? Yet the everlaſting Potentate of Heaven and univerſal Nature, undertakes a more humbling Office of Friendſhip, for a Race of abject Creatures, that dwell in Duſt, and were doomed to Hell.—Let every Child of *Adam*

look unto *CHRIST* by Faith, as all the People of *Iſrael* looked unto *Moſes*, when he went into the Tabernacle of the Congregation to intercede before the LORD. (See *Exodus* xxxiii. 8.)

We have ſeen the *Perſon* reconciling, let us next contemplate the *Manner* of Reconciling. A Subject equally aſtoniſhing and delightful! The Father reconciled Us to himſelf, by laying upon his Son the Iniquities of Us all: by admitting him to ſtand in our Stead, and by exacting from Him, the Puniſhment which we had incurred.—GOD reconciled Us to Himſelf, not only by the Humiliation, but by the Suffering of this Prince of Heaven: and not by ſome ſlighter Suffering, but by his ſuffering unto Death: and not by his undergoing a common Death, but the moſt ignominious and tormenting of all Deaths, the Death of the Croſs. "It pleaſed the "Father, ſays the Apoſtle, to reconcile all "Things to himſelf; making Peace by the "Blood of the Croſs."—Becauſe, we deſerved Shame; the LORD of Glory was numbered with Malefactors, and loaded with Infamy. Becauſe, We deſerved the Bitterneſs

Bitterneſs of Death; the LORD of Life endured the Pangs of Diſſolution, in their unabated and moſt racking Extremities. Becauſe, We were obnoxious to the Curſe of the Law, therefore the ever-bleſſed "JESUS delivered Us from the Curſe "of the Law, being made a Curſe for Us."

Glorious Propitiation! and altogether as complete as glorious! What now ſhall terrify the true Believer? What ſhall ſtand between Him, and his eternal Hopes?—Shall Satan muſter up his Accuſations, and ſet them in frightful Array? Yet, though there may be much Guilt, there is no Condemnation, to them that are in *JESUS CHRIST*.—Does the Law take the guilty Mortal by the Throat, and with its rigorous Severity, ſay, "Pay me "that thou oweſt?" It is paid, fully paid by the Intervention and Suretiſhip, not of a mean Man, but of the mighty GOD made Fleſh.——Does divine Juſtice demand Satisfaction, for the Wrongs received from Sinners? It is not only ſatisfied, but moſt awfully glorified by this wonderful Oblation.—In ſhort, this is a full, perfect, and ſufficient Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World.

World. It vindicates the Honour of GOD's Holineſs. It diſplays his unſearchable Wiſdom. It manifeſts his unutterable Goodneſs. It gives the moſt magnificent and lovely Luſtre to all the divine Perfections. — May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his ineſtimable Propitiation, venture to adopt the Apoſtle's Challenge? "Who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge "of GOD's Elect? It is GOD that juſti- "fieth;" not imputing our Treſpaſſes unto Us, but transferring them to his dear Son. "Who is He that condemneth? It is "*CHRIST* that died," and by his precious Death hath made Reconciliation for Iniquity, and brought in everlaſting Righteouſneſs.

I have been the more copious upon this Subject, becauſe it is not only the grand Point in my Text, but is the very Heart of the Goſpel; the Fountain of all our Comforts, and the Foundation of all our Hopes.—But I proceed, and with greater Brevity,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To obſerve the benign Import, and beneficial Tendency of the Goſpel Miniſtry, expreſſed in that remarkable Clauſe, *He hath given to us the Miniſtry of Reconciliation.* Here, I am not attempting to magnify my Office, or to aggrandize the miniſterial Character; but only to render our Services *acceptable* to our Brethren. —Some Perſons, whether through Prejudice or Miſtake, are apprehenſive of being terrified by our Meſſage, or "tormented "before the Time" by our Doctrine. But can the News of Reconciliation to the LORD GOD of Hoſts terrify, or the Offer of Remiſſion of Sins torment? How welcome ſhould be the Approach, or to ſpeak in the elegant Language of a Prophet, "How beautiful the Feet of Him, "that bringeth good Tidings!" And can there be better Tidings, more reviving, or more tranſporting, than thoſe of the everlaſting Goſpel? Which ſaith unto *Sion*, "Thy Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin "purged:" thy GOD is reconciled, and inſtead of abhorring Thee as a Rebel, is willing to embrace Thee as a Child. — When our Armies have been in the Field,

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and ſome very important, ſome deciſive Engagement drawing near; with what Eagerneſs have you expected, and with what Delight have you received, the Account of a complete Victory gained? And is not our Report equally worthy of all Acceptation; which declares Satan vanquiſhed, and Sin deſtroyed; declares Death aboliſhed, Hell deprived of its Prey, and all the rich Advantages of Peace with Heaven reſtored?—When *Peter* lay bound in Priſon, was the Angel an unwelcome Miniſter, who ſtruck away his Fetters, opened the Gates of Iron, and tranſmitted Him, free and unmoleſted, to the cordial Salutations of his Friends? As You are All, by Nature, in Bondage to Sin, our Buſineſs is, to take You by the Hand, and lead You out of this ignominious Slavery, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of GOD; while the Spirit of the moſt High breaks off your Shackles, and makes you free indeed.——What Manna can be more refreſhing than ſuch a Meſſage? What Balm more healing than ſuch a Service?—— If, at any Time, we arm our

Words with Terror, and denounce the Vengeance of GOD, on every Soul of Man, that doeth Evil. This is only to awaken You from that gay Inſenſibility, which would lull You into irretrievable Ruin. It is like the gathering Clouds, and the diſtant Burſts of Thunder, which might warn *Noah* to retire into the Ark, before that infinitely more tremendous Deluge came, which was to ſweep the careleſs World away.——Whether therefore We diſplay the Allurements of divine Love, it is for Your Delight; or whether We bend the Bow of divine Indignation, it is for Your Benefit: to win You to Happineſs, or drive You from Miſery. So that in every Reſpect, and by all our Miniſtrations, We are to be "Helpers of "Your Faith, and Furtherers of Your "Joy."

And let not any One ſuſpect, that a Meſſage of ſuch free and rich Grace, has a Tendency to ſoothe Men into Supineneſs, or ſerve the Cauſe of Licentiouſneſs. It is, of all other Expedients, moſt

effectually calculated to reconcile Us to GOD, in another Senſe of the Word: to ſubdue our Enmity, and captivate our perverſe Affections; to impreſs our alienated Hearts with adoring Gratitude, and engage our refractory Wills to dutiful Obedience.—For, can We be cold and indifferent to ſuch immenſe Benignity? Can We affront and grieve ſuch unſpeakably tender Kindneſs? What Effect had *David*'s Clemency, in ſparing *Saul*'s Life, when it was in the Power of his Hand, to have diſpatched that implacable Enemy? It overcame, for a while, even Malice itſelf: it fetched Tears of Sorrow from the Perſecutor's Eyes, and Expreſſions of the moſt endeared Affection from his Lips *. And when GOD, the GOD to whom Vengeance belongeth, not only ſpares Us guilty Wretches, but puniſhes his immaculate Son in our Stead; when He bids the Sword of Juſtice paſs by our devoted Heads, and ſheath itſelf in the Heart of his beloved Son; can We reſiſt ſuch heavenly Goodneſs? Can We ſpurn ſuch Bowels of Mercy? Muſt not

* 1 Samuel xxiv. 16.

Love, ſo divine and infinite, melt even the moſt obdurate Heart; make Us fling down, with Abhorrence, the Weapons of Rebellion, and conſtrain Us, ſweetly conſtrain Us to Obedience * ?

Let me now, conformably to my ſacred Commiſſion, beſeech you all to be reconciled. Eſpecially let me beſeech, the humble Penitent, and the haughty Self-righteous Moraliſt.—Ye humble Penitents, that are convinced of Sin, and mourn for Sin, be of good Comfort. GOD has abounded in the Riches of his Grace towards you, and has given you a Ranſom to rely on, of higher Dignity than all Heavens, or of more Value than all Worlds. The Men of *Tyre* made *Blaſtus* the King's Chamberlain their Friend †; the GOD of Glory has conſtituted his dear Son, your aton-

* Mr. *Hervey* had added by Way of a Note the following Words in the Copy which He tranſcribed, and from which this is printed. "When I preached this "Sermon, I recapitulated in this Place, as you, or any "Reader may do if he pleaſes, the preceding Heads, "but I thought it unneceſſary to tranſcribe ſuch a "Recapitulation."

† Acts xii. 20.

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ing Sacrifice, your prevailing Advocate. The Men of *Tyre* deſired Conditions of Peace; the LORD JESUS hath both obtained and fulfilled the Conditions of your Peace. Could there be a more glorious Perſon choſe to act as your Reconciler, than the Prince of Heaven, and Heir of all Things? Could there be a more effectual Method of Reconciliation, than his Obedience unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs? — Fly then to this All-ſufficient Redeemer. Rely on his moſt meritorious and ſatisfactory Sufferings. Be your Sins ever ſo numerous, ever ſo enormous, theſe need be no Bar to your Acceptance. For GOD has received an Atonement: an infinite Atonement GOD has received. So that He can admit you to his Favour, unworthy as you are, without the leaſt Blemiſh to his avenging Juſtice. He can, He will admit you, as freely, as if you had never done amiſs. Truſt therefore in your reconciling Saviour. Place a chearful Confidence in his propitiating Merits. Only let the Grace of GOD, which has appeared with ſuch tranſcendent Lovelineſs in the bleeding

JESUS,—let this Grace teach you, with a prevailing Efficacy, to deny all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily in this preſent World.

As to thoſe of a contrary Character, who are righteous in their own Eyes, what ſhall I ſay? Shall I decry the Exerciſe of Morality, or diſparage the Duties of Holineſs? GOD forbid. The Goſpel is a Doctrine according to Godlineſs, and true Holineſs is the Health, is the Happineſs of the Soul? Theſe Duties iſſuing from Faith, and recommended by the Interceſſion of *CHRIST*, are acceptable to the divine Majeſty. But theſe are not your Saviour. GOD has not reconciled the World to Himſelf by their own pious Practices, but by his Son *JESUS CHRIST*.—Can your charitable Deeds expiate your innumerable Offences? As ſoon may a ſingle Drop of pure Water, correct and ſweeten the unfathomable Brine of the Ocean. Can your defective Performances ſatisfy the Demands of a perfect Law, or your wandering Devo-

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tions ſcreen you from the Diſpleaſure of an injured GOD? As well may your lifted Hand eclipſe the Sun, or intercept the Lightning when it darts through the burſting Cloud.—There is no other Name given under Heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to GOD, and ſaved from Wrath, but only the Name, only the Name remember of *JESUS CHRIST.* Here fix your Hopes, and you ſhall never be diſappointed. Fix them on any other Object, and everlaſting Confuſion will enſue.—We beſeech you therefore, in GOD's Stead, We beſeech you for your own Soul's Sake, reject not this abundant Mercy, neglect not this *GREAT SALVATION.*

Now unto Him, who has reconciled Us to himſelf, and waſhed Us from our Sins, in his Son's Blood, be Glory and Thankſgiving, Love and Obedience, henceforth and for ever.

FINIS.

4 OC 58